

DCIF Project – Recruitment Tool 3: Creating Accessible Job Advertisements

Disclaimer: The content available through the toolkit has been created by the community. This is a free document and is not for sale.

Tags

Who is this for?

High Priority

- Hiring Managers
- Recruiters

Practical Information:

- Direct Line Managers

Useful to Know:

- DEI and HR Professionals

What guidance does it provide?

- How to write an accessible job advertisement

Take home points

- When a job posting is created in a way that all candidates can apply for the job without feeling excluded or uncomfortable, employers can attract candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Special attention should be given to the language used in the job description. Avoid using gender specific words and jargon, consider describing the work environment, and capturing why the position exists and its importance.
- An inclusive job description is primarily competency-based, recognizing that the most critical information is not “how the job will be completed” rather, “if the employee can achieve the outcomes required.”

Accessible Job Advertisements Boost Your Hiring

Job advertisements are a critical first point of contact between an applicant and an organization. The information described here to boost accessibility and inclusivity of the job advertisement can be the key driver to attract applicants with disabilities. The more thought put into this process on the front end, the easier your search and selection process will be on the back end.

“Job seekers spend an average 49.7 seconds reading a job ad before dismissing a position, so first impressions really count” – Weber, 2017⁵

What are bona fide occupational requirements?

Bona fide occupational requirements are considered essential to the job. An employer must differentiate between the essential or absolute job requirements, and the optional or flexible job tasks. Accommodations can support candidates with disabilities in their performance of **bona fide occupational requirements**.¹

For instance, workers such as armoured guards are tasked with securely transporting funds and valuables. To be able to fulfil essential requirements of the job, armoured guards must be able to monitor the goods which they are moving. Glasses or contact lenses are an appropriate accommodation for interested applicants with lower vision.

Including job requirements that are not essential prevent otherwise qualified applicants from applying to a job that they would be capable of doing.

As well, having a clearly defined job description and an understanding of the essential requirements of the job provides a solid basis for designing rules and standards, providing accommodation, assessing the performance of applicants and employees, and making decisions on hiring, promotions, discipline, and termination.

Reviewing Job Requirements on the Advertisement

Before you initiate the recruitment process for any position, it is imperative that you write or update a job description that accurately captures the **bona fide job requirements** for an applicant to be successful in the role. At this stage, consider working through the following questions:²

- ✓ Is the job description current or does it need to be updated?
- ✓ Does the job description accurately reflect the needs and expectations of the employer?
- ✓ Which are essential requirements, and which are non-essential?

When assessing whether a particular task or duty is essential, an employer can consider:²

- ✓ How often is the duty performed?
- ✓ How much time is spent on each duty?
- ✓ How does the duty fit with the others performed in the job?
- ✓ How would the job change if the duty were removed?

The Importance of Using Inclusive Language

Words matter. When writing a job advertisement, the details used to describe the job requirements should not exclude someone with a disability. For instance, listing physical demands that are not essential to perform the job can immediately exclude someone with a disability from the recruiting process.

Here are some other common examples of how employers can inadvertently create **barriers** for people with disabilities within job advertisements. Each example is paired with a suggestion for inclusive language that encourages applicants with different abilities to apply for the job:¹

Language that may create barriers to employment:	Alternative language that is more inclusive:
10+ years' experience in medical administration in a medical specialist's office	Experience working as a medical administrator, including managing patient appointments and requests, and communication with healthcare partners
Valid driver's license required	The ability to travel and provide own transportation
Three years' experience as an insurance auditor	Experience in insurance auditing involving a variety of industries, including several complex audits
A bachelor's degree in Economics	Experience in Economics (preferred) Relevant areas such as Business, Accounting and work experience are acceptable

Many union members and representatives have ground level job tasks, which do not always match the job descriptions. As many members are intimately familiar with actual job tasks, not just job descriptions, unions can assist with developing job ads that only include bona fide occupational requirements to better represent the role.

Taking Your Job Advertisement Further^{1,3}

A clear job title	• The job title is an important recruitment tool that can make an applicant's decision to apply.
Short introduction about the day-to-day of the job	• 4x as many people read the introduction than the ad itself to decide whether to apply to not
Include essential company details	• A study from 200 job seekers found a company's reputation is as important as the work and pay.
Define the work with role responsibilities	• This will tell job-seekers what they will need to accomplish to deliver key results if employed.
Describe your ideal employee with a person specification	• Job seekers will match their skills to decide if they can apply.
Reel applicants in with salary and benefits	• A study found that when job ads include a salary range, they got over 30% more applicants.
Describe and include location details	• 57% of people said location is more important than salary
Don't forget to tell job-seekers how to apply	• Your application process reflects your company's culture - so its important to get it right.

You can use the following checklist to highlight the key advantages of working with your company:⁴

- Opportunity to learn on the job
- Exciting and rewarding work
- Flexible working arrangements
- Environment of mutual respect and support
- Innovative and creative work culture
- Involvement in company strategy and decision-making
- Training and development opportunities
- Benefits: health, mental health, dental, childcare, paid vacation, life insurance, retirement accounts, spending and savings accounts, paid medical leave, assessments if required etc.
- Exceptional rewards: celebrations, events, paid gym memberships, a day off on birthday, etc.

For items noted in your job posting, be sure to remain realistic. Do not promise what you can't deliver. Also, keep in mind this list is not exhaustive. Each company will be different in what they can offer.

Job Advertisement Infographics

- Check that font is accessible – Arial or Verdana are safe bets as they do not have serifs
- Keep font size at 12-point font at minimum and be sure it is high contrast

[Job Title] Searching for a Bank Teller

- Do not use ambiguous language or jargon
- Make sure intentions are clear from the title of the job advertisement
- Avoid generic titles like “Analyst” or “Engineer,” instead use recognizable language and consider the level of role/seniority

[Intro Paragraph] Begin your bank teller job description with an introductory paragraph that tells prospective workers about your bank and your unique working environment. Is yours a large, national bank or a local credit union? Just a few sentences calibrating your recruiting pitch to the ideal applicant will set your company apart from the competition.

- Do not use internal acronyms or information that could create misinterpretation or misunderstandings

[This job involves]

- Serves customers by completing account transactions.
- Provides account services to customers by receiving deposits and loan payments, cashing checks, issuing savings withdrawals, and recording night and mail deposits.
- Sells cashier’s checks, traveler’s checks, and series of bonds.
- Answers questions in person or on telephone and refers customers to other bank services as necessary.
- Maintains customer confidence and protects bank operations by keeping information confidential.
- Contributes to team effort by accomplishing related results as needed

- Describe what the work environment is like and how it influences the way work is to be done (e.g., remote/in-person, travel requirements, etc.)

- Use point form instead of long sentences within long paragraphs
- Use action verbs to describe the duty and include how the work is completed (e.g., analyzes existing data, manages business applications)

[What are we’re looking for in a applicant]

- Customer service
- Attention to detail
- General math skills
- Verbal communication
- Integrity

- Be clear about the essential responsibilities and job requirements, instead of being vague and leaving job applicants to judge for themselves
- Understand that company specific information can always be learned
- Capture why the position exists and is important
- Only include soft skills if they are essential for the completion of the job
- Describe the working conditions and location (e.g., physical environment, hours of work/weekend, challenging clients, etc.)

[Education, Experience, and Licensing Requirements:]

- High school diploma, GED, or equivalent
- Six months consecutive customer service experience in financial services, retail sales, or a goal- oriented environment preferred
- Prior supervisory or management experience a plus

- Do not use gender-based language
- Use clear, simple, precise language

- List education, certifications, lived experiences or training requirements (e.g., post-secondary degree, certifications, etc.)

[Call for Action]

Now you need to turn interested parties into actual applicants. The best bank teller job descriptions tell prospective applicants exactly how to apply with a well-crafted call to action. Give job seekers specific details on resume or application submissions to your HR department or tell them to click the “apply” button at the top of this listing.

E.g., Please email info@DCIF.com with your application. Posting will close when we find a proper applicant. Qualified applicant will be contacted to follow up on their application.

- Do not discriminate against or exclude people with disabilities (e.g., you must own a vehicle or speak on the phone, you must have ‘x’ educational achievements etc.)
- If physical requirements are required, provide details about the of the range of motion, frequency, and strength needed
- Describe any special equipment that must be operated in the workplace

At our company, we are committed to workplace inclusion. Applicants of all backgrounds, including by not limited to individuals with international experience, newcomers to Canada, women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities, and persons of any gender identity and sexual orientation are encouraged to apply. If you require an accommodation at any point in the application process for this position, please contact JaneDoe@DCIF.com with your accessibility needs.

- Invite applicants to use aids and assistive technology to better demonstrate their skills and potential
- Showcase your commitment to an inclusive workplace
- Provide an accessibility statement and a contact for someone who can support accessibility requests

The above job ad does not reflect user accessibility (e.g., extended margins). When this content is put onto our website, it will be made into an infographic or interactive component online that will be accessible. Please see text only version of the guidance in the table below:

Job Advertisement Area	Guidance
Overall Job Ad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that font is accessible – Arial or Verdana are safe bets as they do not have serifs • Keep font size at 12-point font at minimum and be sure it is high contrast
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use ambiguous language or jargon • Make sure intentions are clear from the title of the job advertisement • Avoid generic titles like “Analyst” or “Engineer,” instead use recognizable language and consider the level of role/seniority
Intro Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use internal acronyms or information that could create misinterpretation or misunderstandings
This job involves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what the work environment is like and how it influences the way work is to be done (e.g., remote/in-person, travel requirements, etc.)
This job involves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use point form instead of long sentences within long paragraphs • Use action verbs to describe the duty and include how the work is completed (e.g., analyzes existing data, manages business applications)
This job involves/what we are looking for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about the essential responsibilities and job requirements, instead of being vague and leaving job applicants to judge for themselves • Understand that company specific information can always be learned • Capture why the position exists and is important • Only include soft skills if they are essential for the completion of the job • Describe the working conditions and location (e.g., physical environment, hours of work/weekend, challenging clients, etc.)
What we are looking for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use gender-based language • Use clear, simple, precise language
Education, Experience, Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List education, certifications, lived experiences or training requirements (e.g., post-secondary degree, certifications, etc.)
Education, Experience, Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not discriminate against or exclude people with disabilities (e.g., you must own a vehicle or speak on the phone, you must have ‘x’ educational achievements etc.) • If physical requirements are required, provide details about the of the range of motion, frequency, and strength needed • Describe any special equipment that must be operated in the workplace
Call for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite applicants to use aids and assistive technology to better demonstrate their skills and potential • Showcase your commitment to an inclusive workplace • Provide an accessibility statement and a contact for someone who can support accessibility requests

Intersectionality Avatars

Salima: Pronouns are topic of discussion right now, and rightfully so! Here is my friend Taylor to share their experience on the subject.

Taylor: Hi Salima, thank you for giving me a chance to talk about this important subject. I am a non-binary, trans-person. I have struggled all my childhood with gender dysphoria. Growing up, I never knew how to fit in: should I act like a girl or a boy when neither made sense to me. This caused a lot of anxiety for me. Now, when I look in job ads, and only see he or she pronouns, I cannot be sure if I will be welcome. Will I be accepted for who I am, or will I be ridiculed? Since asking employers can be too much of a risk to take, I simply move on with my job search. I wonder if I have missed out on great job opportunities because of this?

“When everyone’s sharing their pronouns, it takes that responsibility off the transgender and non-binary community.” - Dexter, a TD Bank store manager in Gorham

“People use pronouns in order to describe a part of their identity. Being able to display our pronouns along with own names allows us to bring our whole selves to work as members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.” - Alex Gysen, Regional Managers, 2SLGBTQ+ Business Development

“Openly sharing your pronouns on email signatures, at the start of a call or meeting, when meeting someone for the first time, and on name tags will help us to normalize the sharing of pronoun in professional and personal environments to create a more inclusive environment.” - Alex Gysen, Regional Managers, 2SLGBTQ+ Business Development

“I find it important to share pronouns because no matter how someone looks, pronouns cannot be assumed. When everyone’s sharing their pronouns it takes that responsibility off the transgender and non-binary community.” – Heather Dexter, TD Bank Store Manager

- Do not use decorative font
- Use accessible fonts such as Arial or Verdana
- Keep font size at 12-point font at minimum and be sure it is high contrast

[Job Title] **COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT BANK GURU?**

- Avoid culturally specific language intended to create an image

[Intro Paragraph] Begin your bank teller job description with an introductory paragraph that tells prospective tellers a little bit about your bank and your unique working environment. **In our multilayered organizations, tellers work with IRA, NCUA and ATMS. We actively search for the newest, best, and most upcoming trends and opportunities for new BT. Over the last few years, we have been able to climb all the mountains and successfully retain prospective BT within our bank.**

- Do not use internal acronyms or industry specific jargon
- Be clear and concise so applicants understand what you are communicating (e.g., spell out bank teller instead of using BT)

[Things we need from you!]

Our larger corporate is looking for BT professionals to join our squad. This person **MUST** have at least 2 years of professional experience in the financial field with endless creative dialogue with customers and a bachelor's degree in business or a similar field. Must have the ability to do other work as needed by direction of the CDO and other managers as required. This will require a person to know how to use our B2B sales system as well as our POS systems and processes. He should also have his own vehicle to assist and be available to re-locate to all branches.

- Reframe language to be more inclusive
- Do not use language that screens out people with disabilities

- Avoid gender-based language
- Use you/they/applicant

- Use point form instead of long sentences within long paragraphs
- Be clear about job responsibilities and task requirements rather than asking job seekers to rate their ability
- Understand that company specific information can always be learned
- Ensure language reflects flexibility

Please email info@DCIF.com with your application. Posting will close when we find a proper applicant. Only those qualified for the position will be contacted, do not contact us.

- Provide contact information so applicants may inquire about alternate formats, accommodations, and accessibility

The above job ad does not reflect user accessibility (e.g., extended margins). When this content is put onto our website, it will be made into an infographic or interactive component online that will be accessible. Please see text only version of the guidance in the table below:

Job Advertisement Area	Guidance
Overall Job Ad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use decorative font • Use accessible fonts such as Arial or Verdana • Keep font size at 12-point font at minimum and be sure it is high contrast
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid culturally specific language intended to create an image (e.g., ‘off the reservation’)
Intro Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use internal acronyms or industry specific jargon • Be clear and concise so applicants understand what you are communicating (e.g., spell out bank teller instead of using BT)
Things we need from you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframe language to be more inclusive • Do not use language that screens out people with disabilities
Things we need from you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use point form instead of long sentences within long paragraphs • Be clear about job responsibilities and task requirements rather than asking job seekers to rate their ability • Understand that company specific information can always be learned • Ensure language reflects flexibility
Things we need from you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid gender-based language • Use you/they/applicant
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contact information so applicants may inquire about alternate formats, accommodations, and accessibility

References

¹Hire for Talent Toolkit. <https://hirefortalent.ca/>

²Ontario Human Rights Commissions IV, 2. (2008). Setting job requirements.

<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iv-human-rights-issues-all-stages-employment/2-setting-job-requirements>

³Social Talent. 8 Steps on How To Write A Killer Job Ad (Infographic).

<https://www.socialtalent.com/blog/recruitment/8-steps-write-killer-job-ad-infographic>

⁴Employers Guide to Hiring and Working with Professionals with Disabilities (DCOI Guidebook). *David C.*

Onley Initiative For Employment & Enterprise Development. https://carleton.ca/read/wp-content/uploads/DCOI-guidebook-Employers-Guide-to-Working-with-and-Hiring-Professionals-with-Disabilities_ACCESSIBLE.pdf

⁵Weber, L. (2013). How We Really Read Job Ads. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-ATWORKB-911>